

Key

WORKFORCE ISSUES

Governor honors five who found work through WIA
“Education Pays” for laid-off Fruit of the Loom worker

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Bimonthly publication of the Cabinet for Workforce Development

Adult education plan exceeds first-year goal

Statewide focus, ad campaign cited as factors

by Janet Williams Hoover, Communications Director

Kentucky has achieved the first milestone in its adult education action plan to increase literacy skills and education levels among the commonwealth's adults, Gov. Paul E. Patton has announced.

Kentucky is also experiencing a significant increase in the number of adults earning GEDs and is instituting a GED incentive program for employers and employed students.

“Attracting more adults into lifelong learning is an investment in individuals and an investment in Kentucky,” the governor said. “The return on this investment is educated Kentuckians who are more self-sufficient, more involved in their communities, more engaged as citizens and better role models for their children.”

Adult education goal surpassed in its first year

A review of the plan's first fiscal year shows that the number of Kentuckians participating in adult education programs increased 23 percent — from 51,177 to

62,734 — surpassing the first-year goal of 60,000 adult learners. This is the first step in reaching a goal of 300,000 adult learners by 2010.

Cabinet for Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose said the enrollment goal was exceeded due to greater awareness created by a “Go GED” communications campaign and because of statewide partnerships focusing on the issue.

The Cabinet for Workforce Development and its Department for Adult Education and Literacy, local adult education providers, the Council on Postsecondary Education, the Kentucky Community and Technical College System and the Cabinet for Economic Development have joined with a variety of partners to achieve this statewide initiative.

More Kentuckians earning GEDs

At the same time, the number of Kentuckians earning GEDs in fiscal year 2000-01 increased 12 percent to 13,939 compared to the 12,444 GED graduates in the



Gov. Paul E. Patton meets staff and students at the Thornhill Adult Learning Center in Frankfort, where he announced achievement of the first milestone in the state's adult education action plan.

1999-2000 fiscal year. When comparing the most recent figures to five years ago, the increase is more dramatic. The number of Kentuckians earning GEDs has climbed 41 percent – from 9,876 in 1996-97.

Cheryl King, Department for Adult Education commissioner and Council on Postsecondary Education associate vice president for adult education, said, “We believe that with the increased numbers of adults participating in adult education, we will continue to see GED completions increase.”

GED incentives available to employers, students

In a program administered by the Department for Adult Education and Literacy, Kentucky employers can earn a tax credit of up to \$1,250 by allowing employees release time to study for the GED. At the same time, employees can earn a tuition discount at Kentucky colleges and universities.

Here's how it works:

1. The employer, employee and the local adult education provider sign a contract to participate in the program.

2. The employee agrees to spend at least five hours per week studying for the GED test. The

employer agrees to allow the employee a minimum of five hours per week paid release time to study for the test.

3. When the employee completes the contract and earns a GED, he or she is eligible for a tuition discount at Kentucky public postsecondary institutions. The \$250 per semester discount is available for a maximum of four semesters.

4. The employer files for the tax credit in the year the employee completes the program. The maximum credit is \$1,250 per employee.

“The tax credit is not the only benefit an employer derives from participating in this effort,” said Secretary Rose. “Employers will also realize a gain because their workforce will be better educated, more productive and more adaptable.”

For more information about the incentive program, contact Dr. B.J. Helton, Department for Adult Education and Literacy, 3rd floor, Capital Plaza Tower, 500 Mero St. Frankfort, KY 40601.

Her e-mail address is brendaj.helton@mail.state.ky.us. She can be reached by phone at (502) 564-5114, ext. 153.

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Working despite the odds

Five honored who worked hard to keep working

by Janet Williams Hoover, Communications Director

A former truck driver is now tops in her medical lab technology class. An unsettled youth finds a talent for art. A struggling farmer earns a bachelor's degree to help support his family.

These are three of five alumni of employment and training programs that Gov. Paul Patton recently presented awards to in a ceremony in Frankfort.

The five Kentuckians were recognized for overcoming personal, educational and financial obstacles to become successfully employed.

Sponsored by the Cabinet for Workforce Development's Department for Training and ReEmployment and the Kentucky Workforce Investment Board, the awards recognize exemplary participants in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) programs.

The governor also presented awards to four employers and programs involved in education and training funded by WIA.

"We're honoring five successful Kentuckians today," the governor said, "but they represent the unsung thousands who struggle against many odds to change and enhance their lives for themselves and their families."

The following were honored:

Outstanding WIA Alumni Awards

Wanda Colegrove

Colegrove, of Lovely, lost her job as a rock truck driver when the company closed. After 25 years out of the classroom, she went back to school to become a medical lab assistant.

While in school, Colegrove had a heart attack and surgery and

her sister and husband were both diagnosed with cancer.

Despite these obstacles, she was valedictorian of her class. She is studying for an associate's degree in medical lab technology and works doing medical screenings for business and industry.

Clara Collins

When she lost her bookkeeping job, Collins, from Inez, enrolled in the dislocated worker program. She earned her associate's degree in nursing from Prestonsburg Community College.

Within a month, she was hired as a registered nurse by Highland Medical Center. Part of her job involves training new nurses. She enjoys it so much that she is considering returning to school to become qualified to teach nursing.

Amandia Ferguson

A troubled student, Ferguson enrolled in the WIA Youth Career Program while at Metcalfe County High School.

Ferguson's interest in art led an instructor to arrange a job shadowing experience with a local artist.

While helping to paint scenery for plays, Ferguson's attitude, grades and self-esteem improved. Now a high school graduate, she is selling her own artwork.

Wallace Houchens

After losing her job of 37 years when Kentucky Apparel relocated to Mexico, Houchens earned an associate's degree from Bowling Green's Draughtons Jr. College.

She graduated with a 4.0 grade-point average and perfect attendance.

Houchens, from Glasgow, is employed as a career specialist with the Glasgow Area Career Center.

George Rodgerson

After trying farming and working at an entry-level, low-paying job, Rodgerson realized that upgrading his education was the key to providing for his family.

Rodgerson earned associate's and bachelor's degrees from Murray State University.

Rodgerson, from Hillsboro, now works full time at the Buffalo Trace Area Development District.



Gov. Paul E. Patton and Cabinet for Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose, right, present artist Amandia Ferguson with her WIA Alumni Award.

The program is showing a significant impact in providing a skilled workforce to promote growth in the Grant County area and in Kentucky.

Outstanding Employer Award

Alcan Ingot

This Henderson County company has been involved in the creation and maintenance of the Green River's One-Stop Career Center System.

Several of the company's employees have served on WIA committees and the Green River Workforce Investment Board.

The company has supported and facilitated local workforce partnerships.

Outstanding WIA Program Awards

Bell-Whitley Community Action Program

The Bell-Whitley WIA youth program, headquartered in Pineville, provides alternative school opportunities, occupational skills training, learning centers, job-search skills and a variety of traditional and non-traditional job opportunities.

Grant County Board of Education


The board's Positive Outcome Program helps local low-income youth to obtain a credential and/or employment while gaining life skills.

Excellence in Customer Service Award

Carole Ann Butler

Butler is an employee of Education and Training Resources in Munfordville. She teaches certified nurse assistant classes for women who are improving their education.

She is described as "tenacious" about ensuring her students' success.

Eighty-three percent of her students have passed their state test and become employed in the past three years. Ten are furthering their nursing education. 



George Rodgerson, who sought help from WIA to further his education, spoke at the WIA Awards Luncheon.

Employment for those with severe disabilities

Supported employment is a program that enables people with severe disabilities to obtain and maintain paid employment.


Carol Estes, supported employment program administrator for the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation, a Cabinet for Workforce Development agency, said last fiscal year 355 people found work through the program.

"Yet, there still are 2,000 more eligible for supported employment who are waiting their turn at success," said Estes.

Supported employment services and supports are customized to fit employees' and employers' individual needs and are provided through a network of 55 supported employment vendors statewide.

Services and supports include job coaching; job analysis to determine what an individual needs to do a particular job; regular contact with the employer and employee; and coordination of other resources and services, such as transportation.

"Even though employers are willing to hire someone with a disability, a lot of times they fear hiring people with the most significant disabilities," said Estes. "Supported employment offers assistance to help the employee and assure the employer that this will work."

Employers who want more information about hiring people with significant disabilities can call Estes toll free at 1-800-372-7172. 



Education Pays

Employment Services helps laid-off worker realize his dream of college

by Kim Saylor Brannock, Staff Writer



When opportunity came knocking on Steven Hayes' door, he didn't recognize it at first. In fact, at the time he would have rather not answered it, but in hindsight he's glad he took advantage of his unwelcome visitor.

Three years ago when he was laid off by the Fruit of the Loom Co. in Campbellsville, Hayes started thinking about a dream he had discounted back in the 1980s — college. Gene Matney, an employment services program coordinator at the Campbellsville Department for Employment Services (DES) office, started telling him about educational options. In May, Hayes graduated from Elizabethtown Technical and Community Colleges with associate's degrees in electronics technology and electrical technology. DES is a department in the Cabinet for Workforce Development.

"He really filled in the blanks on my questions," Hayes said. "Mr. Matney gave me the information I needed to make an informed decision."

Hayes qualified for education and retraining financial help through the federally funded Trade Adjustment Assistance (TAA) program. The program is for workers who are laid off from a company when it shuts down and moves to another country. The Dislocated Worker Program under the Workforce Investment Act paid for his training, tuition and books.

In a letter written to Matney and the Campbellsville staff, Hayes wrote, "Without your help in procuring the available funding, it is doubtful that I would have been financially able to return to school. Kentucky's slogan of 'Education Pays' has definitely proven true in my case."

"Sometimes opportunity is 'forced' upon us, but it is still an opportunity, and again I want to thank you for helping me take advantage of this opportunity."

During Hayes' third semester in college more opportunities opened up because of his educational pursuits. He was hired at Gates Rubber Co. in Elizabethtown in electrical maintenance provided he stayed in school. After more than a year with the company, he was promoted to electronic technician.

Hayes had been a machine operator at Fruit of the Loom for more than 16 years before he was laid off. He said he could have transferred to the Jamestown plant

but he was afraid it would close also and he would be in the same position.

"I had a good job at Fruit of the Loom but it was not a job you could enjoy because of the

repetition. It was secure. Now I have a job I enjoy. There's a challenge to it and there's always an opportunity to learn more. My skills are more marketable now," Hayes said.

The 39 year old said going from a full-time job to being a full-time student made him uneasy at first, but the feeling went away after he got comfortable with college. "I saw a lot of people who would get discouraged four-to-six weeks into school. You worry that you've forgotten too much, but just stick with it."

Not only is Hayes more satisfied with his job, but his wages have gone up more than \$6 an hour from his job at Fruit of the Loom.

"There's a sacrifice that goes with it (going to college). We had to cut back some," Hayes said. "The sacrifice we had to make wasn't that much with the state's assistance, but the pay off has been great."

In his thank you letter, Hayes wrote, "This has all seemed like a dream come true, and I could not have imagined that things would have turned out so well for my family and myself. Thanks are very much in order for everyone in the (DES) office for helping me to obtain all of the different funding programs that I could possibly qualify for."

"There's a sacrifice that goes with it (going to college) ... but the payoff has been great."

Steve Hayes, Department for Employment Services consumer and college graduate

Kentucky Tech schools adopt successful parent teacher program

by Mary Ann Scott, Managing Editor

parent and teacher discussion project created by the Prichard Committee for Academic Excellence will be established in the Kentucky Tech school system beginning the first of this year.

The discussions, called "Parents and Teachers Talking Together" (PT3), help parents and teachers exchange ideas about improving education and accomplish specific goals to make those improvements.

Robert F. Sexton, Prichard Committee executive director, said the collaboration between his agency and the Cabinet for Workforce Development is an important step in the state's technical educational system.

"This partnership between the Prichard Committee and the Cabinet for Workforce Development offers both parties an opportunity to improve technical education for high school students across Kentucky," Sexton said.

Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose concurred.

"We are pleased to enter into this project with the Prichard Committee, an organization synonymous with academic excellence. We are eager to see this project implemented for the benefit of Kentucky's technical school students," said Rose.

The Prichard Committee, a non-profit, independent group that advocates for improved elementary, secondary and higher education, provides PT3 training and materials needed to hold the sessions.

The Department for Technical Education's 53 Kentucky Tech area technology centers offer high school students hands-on training and education in a wide array of technical fields.



Knox County ATC Principal Linda Floyd suggested that Kentucky Tech adopt the PT3 process. With Floyd are Workforce Development Secretary Allen D. Rose, left, and Prichard Committee Executive Director Robert F. Sexton.



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Managing the ADA maze



The Americans with Disabilities Act can be confusing to employers and people with disabilities, but help is available

by Kim Saylor Brannock,
Staff Writer

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was signed into law in July 1990, but it is still often misunderstood and confusing.

To assist people with disabilities and employers cut through the maze of information and myths that surround the federal law, Kentucky has an ADA office located in the Cabinet for Workforce Development.

The ADA office utilizes a toll-free number, Web site and training to educate state government agencies as well as the public about the ADA. The toll-free number is 1-877-423-2933 and the Web site is <http://ada.state.ky.us>.

The Americans with Disabilities Act bans discrimination based on disability and requires employers, businesses and state and local governments to take reasonable steps to accommodate people with disabilities. The law requires public buildings and government programs and services to be accessible.

Norb Ryan, Kentucky state ADA coordinator in the Cabinet for Workforce Development, said it is important for the state to keep

abreast of new court cases and legal interpretations involving the ADA. "The state provides leadership. If the state doesn't comply with ADA then why should businesses,

postsecondary institutions or anyone else comply with ADA," he said.

Ryan said he is pleased that Kentucky state government agencies are in the process of making Web sites ADA accessible and are ahead of most states in this area.

Since assuming the ADA coordinator office in March, Ryan has trained more than 500 state workers on the ADA, including employment requirements and etiquette. While Ryan's primary job is to ensure that state government complies with the ADA, he is available to help private companies with training.

In addition to Ryan, the state office has two other staff members

— Al Peach to check new and existing buildings for ADA compliance and Regina Lewis to assist with inquiries.


According to the 2000 U.S.

Census, there are 54 million people in the United States who have disabilities.

"Kentucky ranks in the top five states in the number of people with disabilities but in the bottom four states in employing people with disabilities according to federal statistics," Ryan said. "The problem is many

employers are not aware of how beneficial it can be to hire someone with a disability.

"Our workforce is shrinking as our population ages and this is a population that is available to work," he said.

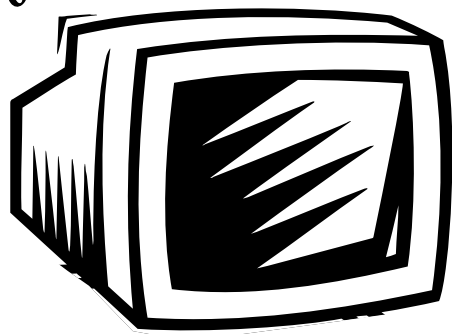
For more information about the ADA, contact Ryan at 1-877-423-2933. 



"... many employers out there are not aware of how beneficial it can be to hire someone with a disability."
— **Norb Ryan, state ADA coordinator**

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